

Self-Conscious Cocoon by [nimiumcaelo](#)

Series: [Flowers Grow Where the Garden Meets the Wood](#) [4]

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Summary:

“Where you tend a rose my lad, a thistle cannot grow.”

Frances Hodgson Burnett

Self-Conscious Cocoon

You spread your wilderness out to wrap around his garden and any last edges of civilization disappear behind you. If they try to walk closer, you send out your bears and wolves and ravines and they scamper back to their safe little homes with concrete and sterile bathroom tile. You pace the wet earth beneath your feet and stand guard against them.

He is coated in you like a caterpillar in its cocoon. You will guard this tender fetus of your affections and he will flourish within you until he is ready to spring forth, bright wings of all colors in the sunlight seeming like a prism reflecting the rainbow. You cannot quite look at him in this brightness for you are made of dark earth and caves and shrink from the warmth he recklessly lavishes on your trembling form. That doesn't stop him.

If you were anything but yourself, he would be safer and stronger and the prickling thistles of the world wouldn't get through to him for you would not make mistakes or stumble and he would surely be better off. You are yourself, however, and that is both your greatest blessing and your greatest curse, for he would have you no other way.

Growth is small and short and slow and flowers do not bloom in a moment. Petals unfurl wet in the predawn hours to be ready when the sun rises and looks down on them to see their radiance. They are only ready to bloom after seeds, shoots, buds. Small things, small steps, small hope growing tremulous. Shaking words, shaking voice, and shaking fingers reach out to nothing – you are falling and there is only air to grasp at – suddenly you land soft on fluffy sheeps' wool that scratches at your neck and the small of your back where your shirt rides up. He smiles and takes your hand and he pulls you up and you both go into the glade.

You listen for him in the dead of night when you are alone. You aren't sure, but you think you can hear his heartbeat if you close your eyes and concentrate. After all, you are so connected that your every breath must match his: two twins in the womb, a stamen reaching skywards in a circle of petals crowded round hushed breathless. Thumping sounds in your ears and you fall asleep to it.

When he is with you, you are scared. You think he might leave. You think he might chafe at your edges, push to get free, leave you ripped open after he claws his way out of you. You are strong, but still fragile; arrows can still pierce your skin. He contains power hidden in his beguiling charm and you know this and you are afraid. He does not seem afraid of you anymore and that worries you more than anything.

To properly protect, you must first be strong yourself. You turn your back on so much to be able to look at him; after all, he is the best radiance there is. Sometimes you can still feel the twitter of fingers poking at your back, vying for your attention, and they bother you immeasurably. Do they not see what you are looking at? Innumerable colors, the softest petal cheeks – browns and fingertips and a laugh that you can only find in this: the garden you protect.

You want to wander through him and find all the weeds so you can pull them out and toss them into yourself for safekeeping. You go as far into him as you are allowed and prune him carefully into happiness. There is a stone that fell into the pathway; you pick it up and carry it out of his petunias and into your cedars.

Sometimes you wonder whether your cocoon is welcome, or even helpful. Your mind is the dark woods at night, flashing eyes at you in

the corners of your vision, soft footsteps startling you into adrenaline rush. He notices this and pulls the curtain open: you were only in your room, tossing restless in your bed. He opens the window and warm laughter floats in like birds and he is twirling swallows in the sky.

If you kissed him you might kill him. If you kissed him you might fly.

Author's Note:

Thanks so much for reading! Also, thank you guys a ton for all the comments you've written. They are super motivating and I really can't describe how happy they make me.

Again, feel free to leave suggestions/requests.

- M